



Farmers Benefit from Favia's Marketing Work

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is one of a series of feature stories highlighting DATCP employees and the programs they work in. A photo is not available with this story.

MADISON – Promoting the ‘orderly and efficient marketing of agricultural commodities’ in Wisconsin is an official state policy. So, by state statute, marketing orders can be issued to commodity producers to promote their product. That’s where Noel Favia and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) come in.

“Noel Favia is a partner to the state’s seven marketing order boards. She assists with elections of board members, meeting minutes, assessment collection and annual reporting,” said Mike Powers, DATCP’s Agricultural Development Administrator.

The Marketing Boards, set up through these orders, support Wisconsin agriculture by using assessment dollars to finance research, product development, marketing and education in specific industries, which ultimately benefits thousands of the state’s farmers.

“Because of Noel, Wisconsin farmers can be confident that each order is moving forward to benefit the interests of the entire industry,” added Powers. “Her ability to work with anyone to create a positive solution is an asset to DATCP and Wisconsin agriculture.”

A marketing order allows producers of a specific commodity to elect a board from their own ranks. Each marketing board is set up as a nonprofit corporation and acts independently but under the general supervision of DATCP.

“Marketing orders and the boards they create are invaluable,” explained Favia. “Without marketing orders, there would not be funding for much needed education and research.”

Currently, Wisconsin’s marketing order boards include: cherries, cranberries, corn, milk, soybeans, ginseng and potatoes. Favia works closely with these groups as some have small budgets and no staff. Others manage budgets of millions of dollars.

Favia has worked at DATCP for over 19 years in food safety, agricultural resource management, agricultural development and the Secretary’s Office. In 1999, she took the full-time job as the Coordinator of the Marketing Order Program. Favia earned a histology degree from Aurora University and before coming to DATCP, had experience in retail and wholesale work.

“I really enjoy being involved in marketing orders. My favorite part of my position is working with people,” said Favia. “I want to be there when they call and not have them listening to an automated message.”

While Favia did not grow up in agriculture, her variety of experiences has given her a wealth of information about the industry. One of the most educational opportunities for her and many others are field days planned by each commodity group. Field days could include a tour of a cranberry operation or learning more about potato production.

“Field days offer an opportunity to bring everyone up-to-date on research, the latest on pesticide application and much more,” said Favia. “They are a wonderful opportunity and sometimes the only time when the industry gets to together to meet and greet and discuss issues.”

While Favia has been coordinating the marketing orders for years, it is only that recently she took on a new responsibility of handling ginseng registrations and shipment certificates. To protect the industry,

ginseng growers must register annually with DATCP. For each sale, a shipment certificate is required that certifies it as Wisconsin-grown.

“I was already working with the ginseng industry marketing order, and it made sense to also handle their registration and shipping paperwork,” said Favia. “In the first year doing this, we have become much more efficient and have been able to offer more of a check and balance to make sure everything is in order for a grower, from the registration to the shipping certificate to the assessment.”

When reflecting about the future of the marketing orders, Favia sees the biggest challenge as participation by the next generation. Now is the time, she says, for young people looking for leadership opportunities to step up and represent their industry by participating on the boards. If there are challenges in their industry, Favia wants to hear about it.

“I am willing to work with anybody about anything, but we can’t move forward if I don’t know the situation. I want producers to not be afraid to talk and keep communication open,” concluded Favia. “Whatever the issue, we can work it out together. That is the benefit of a marketing order.”

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